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United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Mid-Pacific Regional Office
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, California 95825-1898

IN REPLY
REFER TO:
MP-700
PRJ 1.10

AUG 6 2004

Ms. Victoria Whitney
Chief, Division of Water Rights
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 2000
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

Subject: *Delta-Mendota Canal Recirculation Study, Final Report of Hydrologic Modeling*

Dear Ms. Whitney:

The enclosed *Delta-Mendota Canal Recirculation Study, Final Report of Hydrologic Modeling* was completed to fulfill the requirements of Tasks 1 and 2 of the Plan of Action (POA) submitted to and approved by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) on December 15, 2000, in compliance with Condition 2 of Water Rights Decision 1641. The objective of the Recirculation Study (Study) was to evaluate the benefits and impacts of recirculating water pumped from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta through Central Valley Project (CVP) facilities to the San Joaquin River to meet flow objectives at Vernalis, and to determine whether significant benefits, including water quality, could be achieved while at the same time complying with all relevant regulatory conditions.

The report shows that a recirculation operation is able to meet the April/May pulse flow requirement (Alternative 1) and the February through June flow standard (Alternative 2) under the assumptions agreed upon under the POA. Although Alternative 1 can meet the requirements, this shows substantial reductions to CVP contract deliveries and degradation of San Joaquin River mainstem water quality. Alternative 2 shows limited need for recirculation and minimal impact to CVP deliveries and water quality.

During preliminary discussion of draft results, SWRCB staff asked whether changes in assumptions on system facility operations and on use of San Joaquin east side tributary waters could temper the use of recirculation in Alternative 1 and mitigate for its impacts. Concern has also been expressed about issues identified for Phase 2 of the POA – evaluation of fisheries, wetlands discharges, contaminants in the Newman Wasteway, other legal issues, and economic aspects. Reclamation anticipates that these questions will be addressed by studies currently underway by the interagency San Joaquin River Water Quality Management Group (SJRWQMG). These studies are expected to evaluate the feasibility of recirculation and a wide

range of other salinity management actions in the basin. The evaluations originally envisioned as Phase 2 of the POA may also be addressed by the SJRWQMG effort. We recommend review of the studies of the SJRWQMG before proceeding with any Phase 2 work.

Currently, Reclamation is working to implement a recirculation pilot study. The *Draft Water Quality Monitoring Program* is enclosed that outlines how the pilot study will monitor and analyze the effects directly related to transporting water from the Delta-Mendota Canal to the San Joaquin River through the Newman Wasteway.

If you have any questions, please contact Sharon McHale at (916) 978-5086.

Sincerely,

Alan R. Candlish
Regional Planning Officer

Enclosures - 3 copies